

RECOGNIZING FIRE CHIEF
MICHAEL J. PRESTON

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 1, 2005

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Michael J. Preston, Newark, California's Fire Chief, who is retiring after thirty years of exemplary service.

Chief Preston joined the Newark Fire Department on May 1, 1974 as a firefighter. He rose through the ranks to be appointed City of Newark Fire Chief on January 1, 2001. He was president of the Newark Firefighters Association from 1980 to 1985 and assumed the duties of Fire Marshal on December 16, 1987. In his capacity as Fire Marshal, Chief Preston developed the City's sprinkler ordinance for residential occupancies. He was promoted to First Assistant Fire Chief on January 1, 1990 and promoted to Assistant Fire Chief in 1993.

In 1998, Chief Preston served as the City of Newark's Disaster coordinator and in this capacity, procured an auxiliary water system for emergency use. He was also instrumental in promoting the highest level of advanced life support by supporting the presence of paramedics on City of Newark fire engines. In 1999, Chief Preston served as President of the Alameda County Fire Chief's Emergency Medical Services Section.

He has made numerous contributions to enhance the fire safety of Newark's residents. He secured the Automatic Aid Agreement with the neighboring city of Union City and supported technological advancements for the city by procuring advanced technology fire engines that improved service levels. He has also promoted programs that have proven beneficial to the County of Alameda by assisting in the development of the Alameda County Emergency Medical Service System.

I join the admirers of Michael J. Preston's thirty years of dedicated commitment to excellence and offer my sincere appreciation for all he has done to make a difference.

527S

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 1, 2005

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to draw awareness to a bill I will reintroduce to address concerns that have been expressed about political organizations referred to as "527s".

527s are named after a section of the Internal Revenue Code that specifies the tax treatment accorded political organizations and tax-exempt organizations which make political expenditures. Under Section 527, all political organizations are tax-exempt for purposes of federal tax law.

Starting this month, new rules will require more 527s to register with the FEC. 527s whose only purpose is to support or oppose a Federal candidate may only do so with "hard money". Citizens who give to the hard money accounts of these 527s will be under the same contribution limits as if they were giving to Members of Congress. 527s will also not be

able to finance their entire operation using "soft money". They will now have to use a mix of at least 50 percent hard money to pay for activities and expenses, raised using federal limits.

This legislation goes a step farther to give the Department of the Treasury, the Federal Election Commission, and the American people a better understanding of 527 organizations by aiming to place them to the same type of reporting requirements as political action committees (PACs) and other political organizations.

This bill will provide the American people with more information about who is donating to the political process and how that money is being spent. If we want to inspire and encourage more Americans to participate in the political process, we must make all aspects of the process accessible to them.

This bill would make 527s more transparent through the four main components of this bill. First, any political organization that meets defined minimum financial requirements must disclose this information to the Department of the Treasury. Second, political organizations that raise, spend or intend to raise and spend over \$25,000 in an election year will have to file disclosure reports with the IRS monthly. Previously, organizations in this category were only required to file quarterly. Third, organizations with less than \$25,000 in receipts must file quarterly. Fourth, the Department of the Treasury and the Federal Election Commission must work together to improve the database disclosure system.

The guidelines in my bill will bring to light political organizations' donors and demonstrate they have nothing to hide. Moreover, this information will help Americans to make more informed choices.

I believe that efforts to restrict 527 organizations could raise First Amendment concerns and may merely result in their reconstitution as 501(c)4, 501(c)5 and 501(c)6 organizations, which have virtually no public disclosure requirements. I believe that it would be more beneficial to our political process to mandate greater transparency of 527s rather than attempting to shut them down or otherwise curtail their participation in the political process. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

BITTERSWEET RETIREMENT

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 1, 2005

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and wish well in retirement Mr. Tom Clark, of Bakersfield, California. This individual has served his community, his state, and his country well.

Born October 21, 1945, Tom attended school in Bakersfield until he joined the army in 1968 and was promoted to the rank of Sergeant E-5. Following his honorable discharge in 1970, Tom enrolled in the Graduate Program at University of Pittsburgh; where he graduated in 1974 with a Master of Science in Water Supply-Water Pollution Control.

We are thankful Tom utilized his training in school to become a key player in water issues back home, in the Central Valley.

Tom was an initiator of the effort to create the Bay-Delta Accord of 1994 as a response to unreliable water supplies. This agreement was a precursor to the CalFed Record of Decision by the Department of the Interior, which provided for a series of agreements between water agencies and environmentalists.

He was a key player in negotiating the Monterey Amendments to the State Water Project contracts that included crucial revisions to the water shortage provision and the transfer of the Kern Water Bank from the State of California to the Kern Water Bank Authority, a Joint Powers Authority. Tom's efforts were lauded by the community and as a show of gratitude he received the prestigious Association of California water Agencies' Excellence in Water Leadership Award in 1996.

Among his many accomplishments, Tom has taken part in numerous state and local water activities; not only in the public sector, but also in the private sector. He has established himself as an authority on water issues, serving as an expert witness for water management and water rights before state and federal courts as well as before the State Water Resources Control Board.

More recently Tom has been challenged as the Kern County Water Agency General Manager, and taken on a number of significant projects and responsibilities including the acquisition of Kern Lower River rights and the coordination of the Agency's supports toward the passage of the CalFed authorization in October 2004.

Tom has served the people of the state of California and the community of Bakersfield in an exemplary manner. For us, his retirement is bittersweet—although it is well deserved his efforts will be greatly missed. I congratulate Tom Clark, and wish his family all the best.

TRIBUTE TO JIM MEJCHAR, 2004
WISCONSIN CITIZEN OF THE
YEAR, WEST ALLIS-WEST MILWAUKEE
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 1, 2005

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of Jim Mejchar, retiring President of the West Allis-West Milwaukee Chamber of Commerce in February 2005. Mr. Mejchar served in that position for 9 years.

Mr. Mejchar has resided in West Allis for over 40 years, and served on the West Allis police force for 27 years, retiring as a Police Captain. Further, he worked as a Community Development Officer for the Tri-City Bank.

Jim represents a commitment to which we should all aspire, the willingness to get involved and give back to his city. Mr. Mejchar has a firm dedication to community service as demonstrated by his participation on a number of committees and organizations, including: City of West Allis' Block Grant Committee, West Allis Historical Society, West Allis Business Improvement Board and Central Committee, Wisconsin State Fair Board, the West Allis Strategic Planning Committee and West Allis Media Committee Board. Currently he serves on the board of the Kids From Wisconsin and is the Secretary of the West Allis Rotary Club.